

Awakening Palestine.

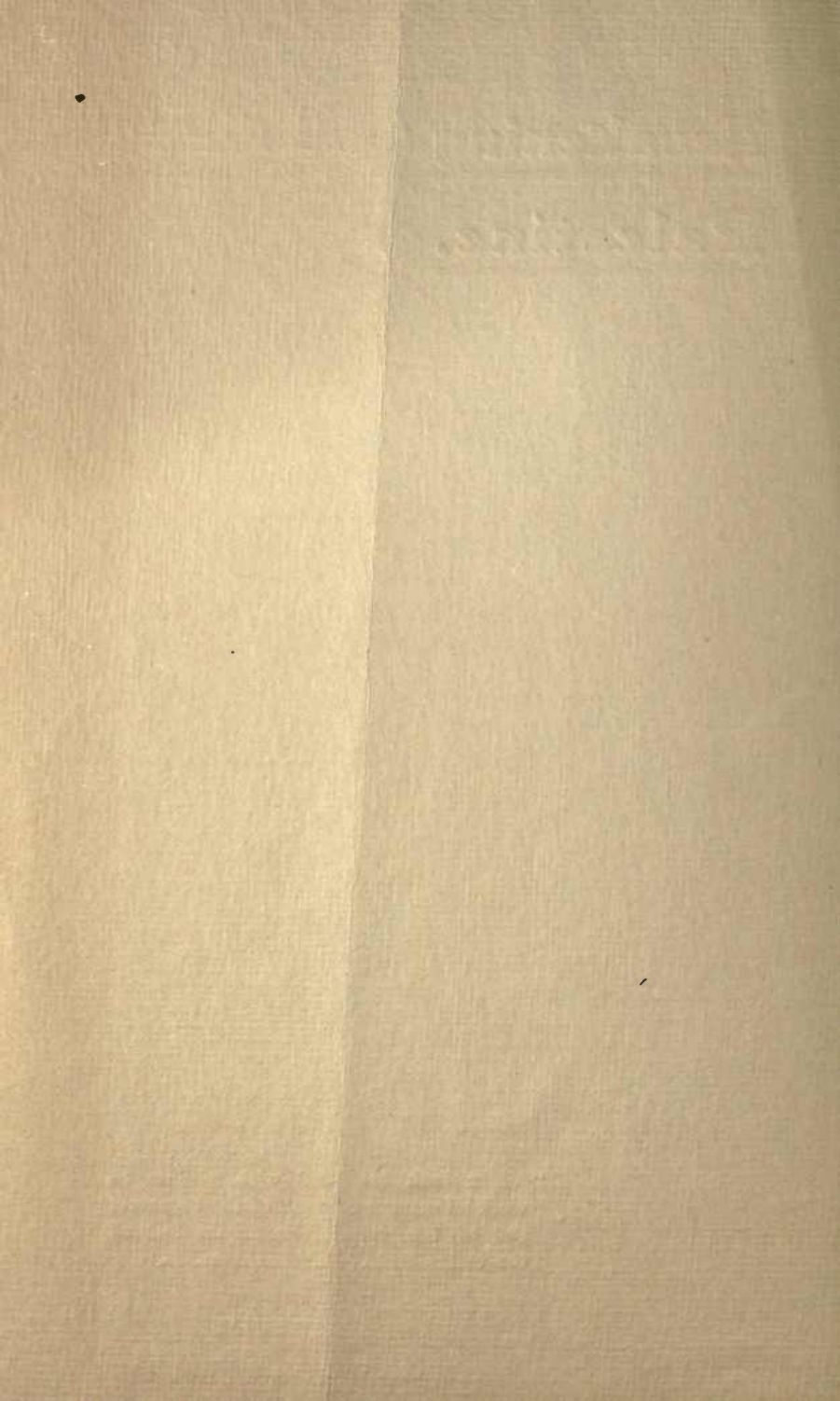
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"Them hath He filled with wisdom to
work all manner of work of the engraver,
and of the cunning workman, and of
the embroiderer."—*Exodus xxxv. 35.*



Issued by the Committee
OF THE
Palestine Exhibition and Bazaar

Particulars of the Bazaar may be obtained from the
Honorary Secretaries,

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2114453

Awakening Palestine.

THE object of the Palestinian Schools Bazaar, which is to be held at the Portman Rooms on the 13th and 14th of May, 1912, is to secure for two leading Jewish schools in Jerusalem—the Evelina de Rothschild School and the Bezalel School of Arts and Crafts—the attention and active support of the Jewish community in England. The progress of Jewish education in Palestine has not hitherto been followed very closely in England, yet the efforts of those who have been engaged upon the task of transforming, often in the face of difficulties and disappointments, the whole character and spirit of the Jewish population, should appeal to every section of the Jewish people.

During the past decade the education offered in Jewish schools has undergone a marked change, which is symptomatic of the altered conditions of Jewish life in Palestine. The schools founded a generation ago, or more, by the Anglo-Jewish Association, the Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden, the Alliance Israélite, and similar bodies, were intended for the children of a Jewish community which consisted mainly of paupers; and their object in giving these children a good European education was to save them from sinking into a condition of ignorance and superstition. But in more recent years the growth of an independent or semi-independent industrial and agricultural Jewish population has created a new spirit of life which has influenced the objects and methods of the earlier schools, and has also produced new schools of a different type. The aim of Jewish education in Palestine is no longer to produce English, French or German Jews. Palestine itself now offers a field for every kind of activity; and what is needed is an education that shall enable the boys and girls of to-day to develop into useful members of the Palestinian Jewish community. For this purpose they need on the one hand a knowledge of the Hebrew language, which is becoming more and more the speech of every-day life in Palestine; and on the other hand a practical training in manual work. Accordingly, the older schools are giving more and more attention to Hebrew as a living language, and

the new schools employ Hebrew as a matter of course, while, at the same time, there is a more systematic attempt to provide the pupils with a handicraft by which they can earn a livelihood after they leave school.

It is inevitable that these schools, whether of the older or of the newer type, should still be in need of external assistance. The Anglo-Jewish Association, as an institution of English Jewry, naturally derives support from this country for its one Palestinian foundation, the Evelina de Rothschild school. But English Jews have scarcely been given the opportunity of recognising the claims of more recent foundations, such as the Bezalel, and it is not perhaps unreasonable to expect that the recognition already accorded, in some measure, to the Evelina de Rothschild school will lead both to wider support of its excellent work and to the awakening of interest in the achievements of the Bezalel.

The Evelina school is attended by some 500 pupils, and it is the largest girls' school in Jerusalem. Until European institutions were founded, the education of girls was almost entirely neglected in Palestine, and the school has still to contend against the ignorance of the parents. Considerable as is the success of the school, it would be more striking if the teachers could devote themselves more thoroughly to the educational work, and were not continually hampered by the sickness which harasses the homes of their pupils. Every effort is made to give the children the nourishment they need and to inculcate in them habits of cleanliness.

"The mothers," says Miss Landau, the headmistress of the school, in a recent report, "find the school's regulations regarding cleanliness very stringent, and many children are withdrawn during the first week of the school year on this account. The want of co-operation on the part of the mothers in the physical care of their children is a grave hindrance to all educational work in Jerusalem."

Difficulty after difficulty of this kind is, however, being overcome. The erection of a new school building has been undertaken, and it is to be expected that while meeting the immediate problem of overcrowding, this course will also lead to more sanitary conditions generally.

Turning to the actual work of the school, the following extract from Miss Landau's report for 1910-1911, gives an apt illustration of the usefulness of the teaching and of its practical character:—

"No change was made in the curriculum of the School this year; the subjects taught comprised Hebrew, English and Arabic, with every description of house-work, laundry-work, millinery, dressmaking, and embroidery and lace-making. I

am very glad to be able to report that interest in our work is gradually awakening abroad. I have received letters from Holland telling me that Queen Wilhelmina, when visiting the Palestinian Exhibition at The Hague, expressed her admiration of the lace and embroidery sent by us, and that she purchased some of it. I hope much for the future of our technical workrooms, which are in part self-supporting, and trust that in a few years all our *ateliers* will be in the same satisfactory position."

A further extract, which is taken from the report of the previous year, gives a brief and illuminating survey of the ground covered and the spirit in which the work is carried on: "We are happy to state that our technical departments, Millinery, Underlinen, Lace and Embroidery, continue to be most successful, paying their own way, as well as providing the needlework materials for the teaching in school and kindergarten, and yet leaving a very fair margin of profit, in spite of the fact that we have to pay a heavy duty on the raw material imported from Europe. It is also a matter of keen satisfaction, that in these workrooms we are enabled to train our girls to earn an honest livelihood when they leave school."

The success of the teaching of handicrafts at the Evelina de Rothschild School is an indication of the practical directions in which the education provided appears naturally to develop; and it explains the success and rapid growth of the Bezalel. This name, with its suggestion of the Tabernacle and the early days of Jewish history, was given to the School of Arts and Crafts founded in Jerusalem in 1906. The idea was that of Professor Boris Schatz, a well-known sculptor who has gained a high reputation in Bulgaria and in Paris. He has made the school his life's work, and has been its Director from the beginning.

The Bezalel has a distinctly practical aim—that of giving its pupils a profession or handicraft whereby they may be able to earn a living; and it is only in a secondary sense a school of Fine Art. The pupils are taken right from the beginning, and are given an elementary education in Hebrew, in addition to the training in drawing, painting and modelling from nature and from life. As they progress, decorative art is taught, and designs are sketched which are used at a later stage in the carpet-weaving class.

The practical work of the school falls under the following main heads:—

1. CARPETS.—Under the direction of two instructors and a foreman about 100 girls aged mostly from 12 to 16, are employed in carpet-weaving. Every kind of carpet, ranging in value from six francs to several thousand francs, is produced.

The output of carpets is steadily increasing in quantity, and there has been a marked advance in quality.

With the rapidly increasing output of the school, especially in the carpet-weaving department, the limited accommodation available grew into a serious obstacle; and room had to be found in neighbouring houses and workshops hired for the purpose. In spite of such expedients, however, the work of erecting a proper workroom for carpet-weaving could not be deferred. Hitherto the "workroom" has consisted of a number of small scattered apartments. Such an arrangement made the necessary supervision and control a matter of great difficulty, and could not in any case be adapted for the use of adequate looms. A new workroom has therefore been erected in the grounds of the Bezalel capable of accommodating from 100 to 150 workers.

2. **FILIGREE WORK.**—This department, which was a later addition to the school, employs an instructor and 54 workers. It produces candelabra, ornamental spice-boxes, and other articles associated with Jewish ritual observances. In the fifth report of the school, issued in January, 1911, an extract is given from the impressions which a visitor from Berlin, himself a distinguished craftsman, has recorded of the work and character of the Bezalel. After dealing with the promising output of the carpet-weaving department, the writer in a lively passage, describes the filigree workroom, doing full justice to the keenness and intelligence of the workers. "Along the walls," he says, "there squat upon the tables, each with his tool-box before him, the Yemenite workers (*i.e.*, Jews from Southern Arabia), who possess unusual skill in filigree work. Among the younger generation one sees a series of interesting types, boys with an intelligent expression who toil with great industry."

3. **WOOD-CARVING AND INLAID WORK.**—In this department decorative articles of furniture and reliefs are made. This branch of the work occupies an instructor and 33 workers. The articles produced find a good market, comparing, as they do, most favourably with other Oriental articles of a similar character, and further progress is assured as soon as the proper mechanical appliances can be installed.

4. **LACE.**—The manufacture of lace is one of the newest activities of the school, and already excellent progress is reported. 38 women and girls are engaged in this workroom, which is under the supervision of two competent lady instructors.

5. **COPPER WORK.**—The output of copper articles is on the increase, 21 workers being engaged in this department under a teacher and a foreman instructor. Here, as elsewhere, every effort is being made to infuse into the work an individual

character, although it is doubtless difficult to avoid the accepted conventions of Oriental design, especially in regard to articles which are so abundantly produced all over the East for the cheaper European markets. At present it is only the decoration of the vessels, etc., which is undertaken by the Bezalel. The production of vessels and other articles from the crude metal should give employment to local artisans trained in the school, and would doubtless tend to foster a greater originality in design. For this purpose, as well as for the greater usefulness of the woodworking department, with which the copper work could be advantageously combined, the introduction of suitable mechanical appliances is essential.

Having regard to the actual advance in the character and extent of the work undertaken and produced, the directors of the school have every reason to be satisfied; but the fullest advantage of the progress already recorded can only be secured if the activities of the school are continued on the best modern lines; and the introduction of up-to-date tools and machinery should be an enormous aid and stimulus to success. The enthusiasm of Professor Schatz and his assistants is invaluable; with adequate support and encouragement from outside, the most sanguine expectations of the friends of Bezalel—and they are indeed many—cannot fail to be realised. The annual reports of the school give some indication of the rate of progress, especially during the last three or four years. In 1908 the number of those engaged in all forms of work at the Bezalel (*i.e.*, teachers, pupils, and other workers), numbered 100; in 1909 this figure had increased by 50 per cent.; in 1910 the number reached 270; and in 1911, 457. Similarly, the value of the work produced and sold was £800 (20,000 fr.) in 1908; £1,400 (35,000 fr.) in 1909; £3,600 (90,000 fr.) in 1910; and over £5,000 (133,000 fr.) in 1911. The profit on the goods sold last year amounted to over £1,000; and a company in Warsaw has entered into a contract to take wares from the school to the value of half a million francs within four years.

Evening classes are held at the school both in the subjects above mentioned and in Fine Art. Several of the most gifted pupils of the Fine Art section have gone abroad to complete their studies. Others are employed at the school itself as teachers.

Professor Schatz has made it his aim from the start to avoid mere imitation of European models and ideas, and to give to the work of his school a distinctive Palestinian character. The art of the Bezalel, while its technique comes from the West, is intended to be local in its subjects and in its atmosphere; it is to draw its inspiration from the natural products of Palestine,

animate and inanimate. To this end a museum has been formed in connection with the school, containing specimens of the flora and fauna of Palestine, Jewish antiquities, and representations of the artistic work of the ancient Jewish people. This collection is already one of the most striking in the Holy Land, and is designed to form the nucleus of a national museum.

As already indicated, the work of the Bezalel is pronounced by competent judges to possess very high merit from the artistic point of view. In Germany, where considerable interest is taken in the school, its products now possess a commercial value ; and there is no reason why they should not find a steady market in England also, if once they were widely known. Nor is it possible to over-rate the value of the work done by the school in providing its pupils with the possibility of earning a living by the labour of their hands. It is just the lack of manual training that is responsible for much of the present poverty of the Jewish population of Jerusalem.

The success which has attended the exhibitions of the work of the Bezalel held in Europe during the past three years encourages the promoters of the Palestinian Bazaar in the belief that it will attract widespread interest and support. Arrangements have been made for a complete display of the art of Palestine as exemplified in the work both of the Evelina de Rothschild School and the Bezalel. Whether that art is to be truly national depends upon the warmth of the encouragement it will receive when its aims and achievements are properly understood. In conclusion, it should be pointed out that one of the most cherished aspirations of Professor Schatz has already been realised in the foundation of the first workers' colony of the Bezalel, which is now rising in the neighbourhood of Lydda.

It is surely no insignificant work to which we invite your attention. The attempt at once to make the growing Jewish population of Jerusalem self-supporting and independent, and for the first time in 2,000 years to foster an artistic impulse which shall have a distinctive Jewish character, should win sympathy and support from Jews all the world over.

PALESTINE EXHIBITION AND BAZAAR

IN AID OF

The "Bezalel" School and the Evelina de Rothschild School,

* JERUSALEM. *

TO BE HELD AT THE

PORTMAN ROOMS. BAKER STREET. W..

On May 13th and 14th, 1912,

2.30 to 10 p.m.

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Tickets, price 2/6 (including admission to the opening ceremony) and 1/-, can be obtained in advance from any member of the Executive or General Committee.

The Bazaar will represent

A JERUSALEM STREET.

STALLS.

1. BEZALEL.—The Lady Swaythling, Mrs. F. S. Franklin, Mrs. M. E. Lange.
2. EVELINA SCHOOL.—Mrs. Nissim, Miss Löwy, Mrs. F. D. Sassoon, Lady Tuck.
3. PALESTINE JEWELLERY AND PHOTOGRAPH FRAMES.—
Lady Spielmann, Mrs. L. L. Cohen, Mrs. Elkin Mocatta.
4. RITUAL ARTICLES.—Mrs. H. Gollancz.
5. PALESTINE PRODUCE.—Mrs. Haden Guest, Lady Cohen, Mrs. C. G. Montefiore.
6. ORIENTAL FANCY STALL.—The Baroness Percy de Worms, Mrs. Haldinstein, Mrs. Hansford, Mrs. Walter Levy, Mrs. Schloss, Mrs. Vandenberg.
7. EASTERN DOLLS.—Mrs. M. Jonas, Mrs. B. B. Weil.
8. FLOWERS.—Mrs. Cecil Raphael.
9. JEWISH ART.—Mrs. Bentwich.
10. JEWISH BOOKS.—Mrs. Redcliffe Salaman, Mrs. E. Davis, Mrs. I. Gollancz.
11. JEWISH CHARITY WORKROOMS.—Mrs. Lebus.
12. CIGARETTES.—The Hon. Mrs. G. Montagu, Mrs. Hirsch.
13. SWEETS.—Mrs. J. Gluckstein.
14. TEA.—The Baroness de Goldsmid da Palmeira.

Mr. Alfred de Rothschild has kindly lent for both days his Private Orchestra, under the direction of Mr. Carl Heubert.

PICTURES OF LIFE IN PALESTINE.

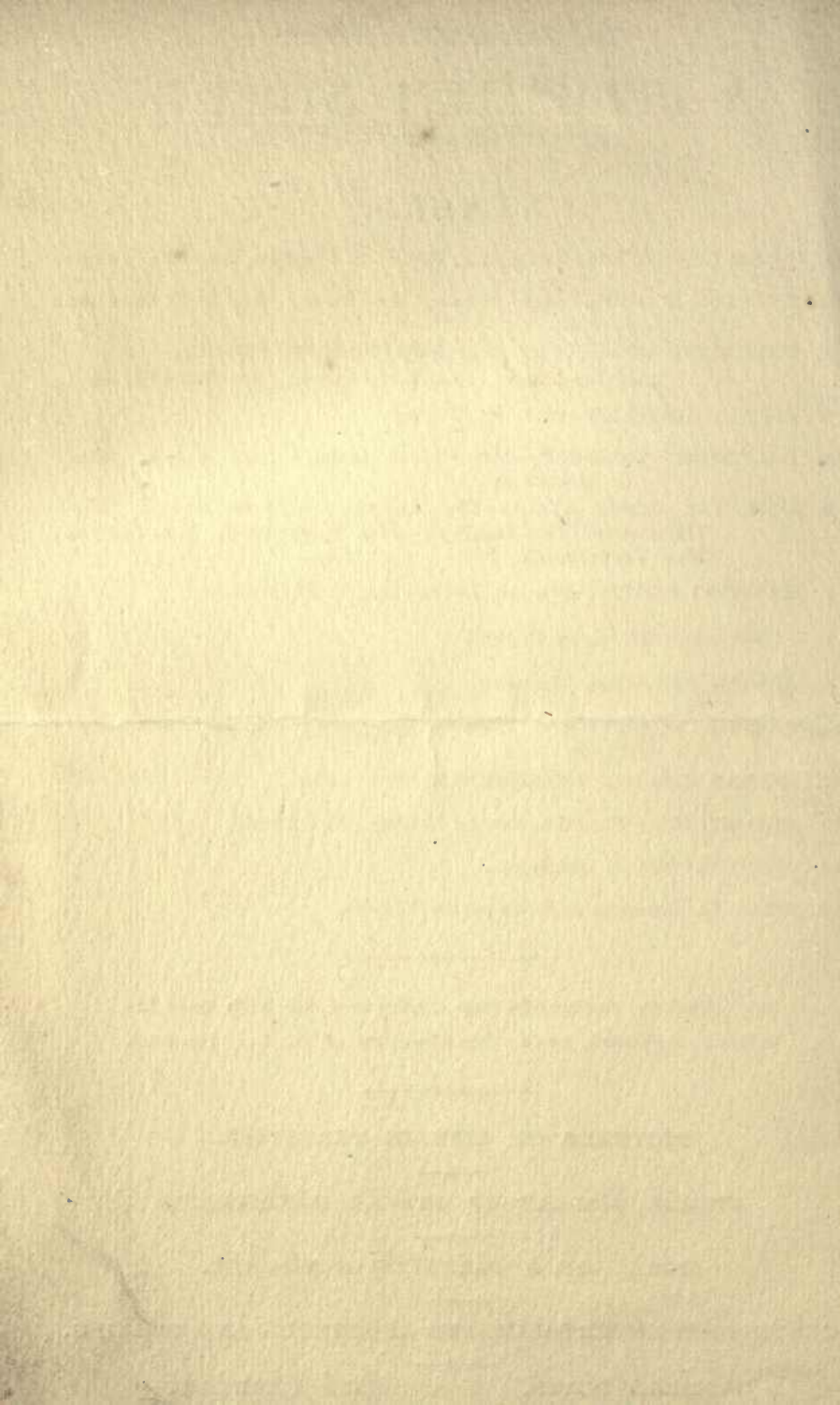
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